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Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

Themes for the second high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The present note is submitted to facilitate the consultations among Member States on the themes for the second high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership.

2. By paragraph 5 of its resolution 53/181, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in close consultations with Governments, all relevant parts of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental organizations, to propose themes for the promotion of international economic cooperation for development for the second high-level dialogue for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

I. Proposals of Member States

3. The Secretary-General consulted Governments by means of a note verbale dated 22 February 1999, in which he requested that the views and suggestions of Governments on possible themes for the second high-level dialogue be communicated to him by 1 June 1999 (the deadline was subsequently extended through 30 June 1999).

4. In response to this note verbale, the following proposals were received:

Bangladesh

- Sustainable partnership for development: potentials for collaboration between government and civil society

China

- Comprehensive discussion on international trade and integration of developing countries in the world economy

Ecuador

- Decentralization of public administration
- Privatization in different sectors
- Social development in different sectors

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Germany (on behalf of the European Union)

- Generating an enabling national and international environment for mobilizing domestic resources for development in the global economy

Ghana

- Poverty eradication, key to international development in the twenty-first century

Mauritius

- Future of small economies in a globalized world
- Challenges of peacemaking and peacemaking operations
- The role of regional trade blocs in fostering greater integration of developing countries in the global economy
- Foreign investment as a development tool
- Human integration and its cultural impact
- Development dimension of the international trading system

Romania

- Promoting economic security: objective of the national strategies and of the international cooperation for development through partnership

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- Enhancement of regional economic cooperation and integration

Turkey

- Advancement in the fields of information and communications, and its impact on international economic relations and national economic activity

United States of America

- Strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership: engaging the private sector

II. Proposals of bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations

5. The following proposals were received from the relevant parts of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental organizations:

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

- Global institutions for an interdependent world
- International migration
- International cooperation in eliminating human deprivation

United Nations Environment Programme

- The impact of economic and financial shocks in the global economy on environmental policies at the national, regional and global levels

United Nations University

- Economic causes and prevention of humanitarian crisis

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- Finance for international cooperation: is it optimally allocated in relation to objectives?
- A human rights approach to international cooperation for development

World Health Organization

- The role of the United Nations in achieving peace at the beginning of the new millennium
- Social movements for health and human development
- Sustainable development: the unifying theme of major international conferences and the central role of health
- The role of health in poverty eradication
- Globalization, the economic crisis and their impact on social development

Organization of American States

- The contribution of regional and subregional trade and economic integration to the broader goal of development

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

- Implementing the development partnership strategy, including the comprehensive development framework and the common country assessment
- Strengthening public sector management capacity
- Integrating developing countries into the multilateral trade and investment systems
- Sustainable development: establishing sound policies and institutional frameworks

African Development Bank

- Good governance, democracy and development: the imperatives of North-South cooperation

Asian Development Bank

- Economic growth for human development in the twenty-first century: issues in divergence within and across countries
- Forging partnerships for development at the regional and subregional levels
- Bringing the private sector into international and regional partnerships
- Keeping the client country in the driver's seat
- Partnerships and internal coordination among developing countries in the context of a comprehensive development framework
- Strengthening public-private partnership for crisis prevention, development and poverty reduction

Inter-American Development Bank

- Preserving identity, ownership and innovation in the partnership approach to development cooperation

III. Elements to be considered in selecting the theme for the second high-level dialogue

6. In his previous reports (A/50/480 and A/52/425), the Secretary-General recommended a number of possible themes to indicate the kind of topics that could be usefully discussed, including globalization and the rules of game; development finance; competition; regional integration and the global economy; strengthening the means for development cooperation, including South-South cooperation; information technologies and development; international migration and development; prevention and management of emergencies and post-conflict peace-building; and crime, drugs, violence and global stability, i.e., the issue of "uncivil" society.

7. It will be recalled that the General Assembly, by its resolution 50/122, devoted its first high-level dialogue to the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications. This first dialogue resulted, *inter alia*, in Assembly resolution 53/169 on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence.

8. Concerning development finance, the Assembly, by its resolution 52/179, decided to consider convening a high-level intergovernmental forum on financing for development before the end of 2001 and in the first half of 1999. A working group of the General Assembly agreed that the forum would address national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development in a holistic manner in the context of globalization and interdependence (see A/AC.255/L.1).

9. With regard to the issue of "uncivil" society, at its twentieth special session, in 1998, the General Assembly considered the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities, and the promotion of strategies, methods, practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the problem of illicit drugs.

10. Besides these activities and initiatives by the General Assembly, all of which are germane to the selection of the theme for the second high-level dialogue, the Economic and Social Council has undertaken and will undertake a number of activities, particularly at its high-level segment, which are also of direct relevance. Thus, in 1997, the Council took up the theme "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade". In 1998, it considered the theme "Market access developments since the Uruguay Round, implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in that context of globalization and liberalization". In 1999, it discussed the theme "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women". And in 2000 it will take up the theme "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy".

11. In addition, the Assembly may wish to take into account other specific events to be held in a similar time-frame, so that the high-level dialogue might take into consideration the outcome of these events or provide a contribution to them. These events are the following:

(a) The Millennium Assembly;[1]

(b) The tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held at Bangkok in February 2000;

(c) The United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, to be held in 2001;

(d) The Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in November 1999, and the proposal for a "Millennium round";

(e) The special sessions of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", to be held in New York from 5 to 9 June 2000, and on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives, to be held at Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000;

(f) The high-level dialogues between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions.

12. In selecting the theme for the high-level dialogue, the Assembly may wish to recall that the Secretary-General had suggested that themes be selected in the light of the principal objectives of the dialogue, that is, to promote broader and deeper understanding of issues of a global or transboundary nature that cut across individual, regional or group interests.

13. Furthermore, the theme should be of interest to a large number of stakeholders in economic cooperation and development in order to provide an impetus and identify areas for increased partnership between a wide range of actors (local and national government agencies, regional organizations, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector). Also, the high-level dialogue should enable the Assembly to receive the maximum benefit from ministerial participation and from the presence of heads of agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the international trade and financial institutions.

IV. Proposals and recommendations by the Secretary-General

14. Based on the above considerations and taking into account the wide range of subjects proposed by Member States and international organizations as well as the need to achieve a tangible movement beyond what has been discussed to date, especially the need to move beyond the general and broad approach to globalization, the following theme for the second high-level dialogue is proposed:

> "Responding to the challenges of globalization: strengthening regional cooperation and building new partnerships for development".

15. This theme should provide an opportunity to review the effectiveness of various forms of development cooperation and explore ways to ensure complementarity and create synergy between bilateral and multilateral cooperation, regional and interregional cooperation, the role of State and non-State actors, including the private sector, and any other forms of cooperation, including South-South cooperation.

16. With regard to the preparations for the second high-level dialogue, the Assembly may wish to consider the modalities proposed by the Secretary-General in his previous report (A/52/425), especially paragraphs 25 (e) and (f), as well as the note on the preparatory process which was made available to delegations during the informal consultations in early 1998 leading up to the first high-level dialogue.

17. The main thrust of those proposals was to use a "bottom-up" approach that would allow the traditional intergovernmental deliberative process to benefit from a concentrated and focused infusion of perceptions, ideas, lessons of experience and policy advice from those directly involved in and affected by globalization. This approach would entail the convening of a series of consultations on different levels, including at the regional level, involving not only Governments but also relevant parts of the United Nations system, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the business community, the academic and scientific community, NGOs, parliamentarians and other constituencies of the civil society. If such an approach were to be adopted, the preparatory process should commence well in advance of the actual meeting.

Notes

[1] It may be noted that based on consultations held thus far, the Secretary-General has proposed the following as the overall theme and the subtopics of the Millennium Assembly:

(a) Overall theme: The United Nations in the twenty-first century;

(b) Subtopics:

(i) Peace and security, including disarmament;

(ii) Development, including poverty eradication;

(iii) Human rights;

(iv) Strengthening the United Nations.